

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 23219 01 OF 02 101654Z

53

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

/027 W

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R 101641Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO USDA/WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3821

ALL EC CAPITALS 0148

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 23219

TOFAS 238

FOR FCA DIVISION

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: WEEKLY DROUGHT SITUATION REPORT

REF: TOFAS 232

1. NORMAL AVERAGE RAINFALL AT THE SEVEN SELECTED STATIONS CITED REFTTEL IS 55 MM IN JULY AND 65 MM IN AUGUST. RAINFALL IN JULY WAS ABOUT 50 PERCENT OF NORMAL. WITH LITTLE RAIN OTHER THAN SOME LOCALIZED SHOWER ACTIVITY EXPECTED IN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS, THE OUTLOOK IS FOR VIRTUALLY NO RAINFALL IN THE DROUGHT-EFFECTED REGIONS DURING THE FIRST HALF OF AUGUST. CONTINUATION OF THE DROUGHT IS GIVING NEW FORCE TO DEMANDS OF OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS AND AGRICULTURAL GROUPS THAT THE GOF PROVIDE FINANCIAL RELIEF TO FARMERS IN ADVANCE OF THE SEPTEMBER 29 "STOCK TAKING DAY".

2. ACCORDING TO AGMIN SAMPLE SURVEY BEEF PRODUCTION INCREASED 31 PERCENT OVER THE SAME WEEK LAST YEAR, MAINTAINING THE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED HIGH RATE OF PRODUCTION. DURING JUNE OFFICIAL DATA SHOW THAT BEEF PRODUCTION (DOES NOT INCLUDE VEAL WHICH IS NEARLY STABLE)

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 PARIS 23219 01 OF 02 101654Z

ROSE 32 PERCENT OVER JUNE 1975 BUT, SURPRISINGLY,

SLAUGHTER ROSE ONLY 30 PERCENT, REFLECTING AN INCREASE IN AVERAGE WEIGHT OF ALL FAT CATTLE TO 307.6 KILOS FROM 301.3 KILOS. FOR FIRST HALF OF 1976, BEEF PRODUCTION ROSE 4.4 PERCENT AND SLAUGHTER INCREASED 1.3 PERCENT. WITH CONTINUATION OF THE DROUGHT AND ANTICIPATED SHORTFALLS IN REQUIRED FORAGE, WE FORESEE CONTINUED HIGH SLAUGHTER RATES INTO THE FALL WITH A LIKELY DECLINE IN AVERAGE SLAUGHTER WEIGHTS BASED ON AGATT DISCUSSIONS WITH PRODUCERS.

3. CEREAL PRODUCTION ESTIMATES REMAIN UNCHANGED FROM LAST WEEK. WE WILL CABLE OUR MAJOR GRAIN S&S TABLES THIS WEEK IN ADVANCE OF THE GRAIN AND FEEDS REPORT. WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE FINMIN, THE PRICE OF COMPOUND FEEDS WAS RAISED 8.75 PERCENT IN SPITE OF COMPLAINTS FROM FEED USERS. THE COMPOUNDERS REPLIED THAT THIS WAS INEVITABLE GIVEN THE INCREASE IN THEIR RAW MATERIAL PRICES. DEMAND FOR COMPOUND FEED HAS BEEN HEAVY WITH SOME REPORTS OF UNFILLED ORDERS.

4. AS REPORTED REFTTEL, WE EXPECTED SHARP INCREASE IN NUMBER OF DEPARTMENTS OFFICIALLY DECLARED DISASTER AREAS. LAST WEEK 14 MORE ADDED, BRINGING TOTAL TO 42. ACCORDING TO JULY 10, 1964 LAW DEALING WITH AGRICULTURAL DISASTER, SUCH AREA ARE ENTITLED TO LAW LOAN RATES (4.5 PERCENT, 4 YEARS) PROVIDED BY A SPECIFIC "NATIONAL FUND OF GUARANTEE". DUE TO HEAVY FINANCIAL BURDEN WHICH COULD RESULT FROM DIRECT APPLICATION OF THE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 23219 02 OF 02 101651Z

53

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 23219

LAW FOR SO MANY DEPARTMENTS, MINAG IS EVALUATING A COMPENSATION SYSTEM WHICH WILL PRESUMABLY INCLUDE DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AS WELL AS SHORT-TERM CREDIT.

5. ON AUGUST 5, STATE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE PIERRE MEHAIGNERIE CALLED A MEETING OF THE "NATIONAL DROUGHT COMMISSION" TO DISCUSS VARIOUS MEANS OF ASSISTING FARMERS. MEHAIGNERIE CLAIMED THAT "SUFFICIENT FORAGE WOULD BE AVAILABLE THIS WINTER AND AT NORMAL PRICES". HE ALSO STATED THAT SUPPLIES WOULD BE AMPLE FOR CONSUMERS, "WHO NOW ONLY SPEND 28 PERCENT OF THEIR BUDGET ON FOOD VS 45 PERCENT 25 YEARS AGO". IN PRINCIPLE, HE AGREED TO RECOMMENDATION THAT CREDIT TERMS FOR DISASTER AREAS BE LENGTHENED FROM 4 TO 7 YEARS FOR PRODUCERS ALREADY ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY ADVERSE WEATHER DURING PAST TWO YEARS OR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FARMING LESS THAN 5 YEARS (I.E. MAINLY YOUNG FARMERS). HOWEVER, HE REMAINED FIRM IN POSITION THAT DETAILED MEASURES COULD NOT BE ANNOUNCED UNTIL THE ACTUAL INCOME LOSSES WERE KNOWN ON SEPTEMBER 29.

6. ALTHOUGH MEHAIGNERIE PUBLICLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FORAGE SUPPLIES, OTHER MINAG OFFICIALS PRIVATELY CONCEDE THAT FORAGE SITUATION COULD BECOME CRITICAL UNLESS RAINS
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PAGE 02 PARIS 23219 02 OF 02 101651Z

RESUME SSHORTLY. OTHERWISE, SLAUGHTER RATES COULD INCREASE SHARPLY ABOUT MID-OCTOBER WHEN CATTLE ARE NORMALLY TAKEN OFF PASTURES.

7. ESTIMATES FOR OTHER CROPS UNCHANGED FROM REFTEL.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, DROUGHTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PARIS23219
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760307-0959
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760869/aaaachwq.tel
Line Count: 156
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2004 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <14 JAN 2005 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEEKLY DROUGHT SITUATION REPORT
TAGS: SWEL, FR
To: USDA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006